

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 9, 1999**

The On-site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Wednesday, June 9, 1999, at 11 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Steven Baker of the Arizona Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss technical training course outlines prior to the upcoming Fifth NELAC Annual Meeting.*

**TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSE ISSUES**

The committee discussed four training course outlines (microbiology, organics, metals, toxicology) distributed electronically by Mr. Baker prior to the meeting. Two of the outlines (microbiology and organics) have already been posted on the NELAC Website. It was suggested that the committee's initial task concerning training might be to set a goal to strengthen the standard in reference to technical training. This suggestion generated considerable committee discussion. It was generally agreed that assessor training will be the key to ensuring consistency with the NELAC standards in on-site assessments across the nation. There was some debate, however, of whether it is necessary for technical assessors to have performed the analytical methods they are auditing. Several participants expressed the opinion that an audit requires an understanding of what is essential to the method rather than hands-on experience. They questioned, therefore, the amount of analysis-specific detail necessary in assessor training and expressed the belief that essential elements should be reflected in the assessor checklists.

There was moderate discussion of how to handle state program requirements during an on-site assessment, and of whether state requirements should be included in technical training courses. It was noted that state program requirements may dictate elements that are not in federal programs. One participant commented that if laboratories are audited to program method analytes then program must be included in the audit at some point. The committee did not reach a resolution on this issue.

**MISSION STATEMENT ON TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR ANNUAL MEETING**

After considerable discussion of the challenges associated with developing technical training course outlines, the committee developed a mission statement on training to be presented at the annual meeting. This mission statement, which met with consensus committee approval, reads as follows:

***The purpose of the technical training courses is to ensure consistency of knowledge and techniques among the NELAC assessors. The technical courses assume a basic knowledge of the course subject and will, therefore, concentrate on the elements of the technology or methods which are key to properly assure laboratory competency to deliver data of known and documented quality.***

Ms. Barbara Finazzo, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), asked the committee how they expected to approach the training issue at the annual meeting. Mr. Baker responded that he expected to present the mission statement and that the remainder of the time allotted to discussion of training issues would probably be spent answering questions and addressing audience concerns about training (time and expense issues, for example). Ms. Finazzo suggested that the committee concentrate on reaching consensus on the concept of assessor training and then proceed with more detailed development of training courses in the coming year. She noted that the committee is introducing a relatively new idea of auditor/assessor and that the standard can be adjusted as technical courses develop.

## **CONCLUSION**

Members of the committee noted that the metals training course outline developed by Mr. Wayne Davis differs significantly from the microbiology and organics course outlines already posted on the NELAC Website. It was decided that copies of the metals course outline should be made available to attendees at the annual meeting so that they can compare the three outlines and submit comments to the committee. Mr. Davis volunteered to prepare the copies. Committee members also noted that investigating the use of a satellite system for training might enable them to respond more fully to potential concerns about the cost of assessor training. Although this issue had been discussed previously, the committee was unsure of its resolution. Ms. Finazzo consented to check again on policies governing the use of USEPA satellite systems for training use. The committee decided not to schedule another teleconference before the fifth annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY. The allotted teleconference time having expired, the committee meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. EDT.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 9, 1999**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Ms. Lisa Greene (Research Triangle Institute) will prepare an overhead transparency of the committee's mission statement on training and will transport to Saratoga Springs, NY, for use at the annual meeting.	NELAC V
2.	Mr. Davis will prepare photocopies of the metals technical training course outline and will transport to Saratoga Springs, NY, for use at the annual meeting.	NELAC V
3.	Ms. Finazzo will investigate USEPA policy governing use of the agency's satellite training system for use in NELAC assessor training.	NELAC V

**PARTICIPANTS  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 9, 1999**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Phone/Fax/E-mail</b>
Baker, Steven Chair	AZ Dept of Health Svcs, Lab Lic. & Cert.	T: 602-255-3454 F: 602-255-3462 E: sbaker@hs.state.az.us
Buhl, Rosanna	Battelle Ocean Sciences	T: 781-952-5309 F: 781-934-2124 E: buhl@battelle.org
Davis, R. Wayne	SC Dept. of Health and Env Cntl	T: 803-935-7025 F: 803-935-6859 E: davisrw@columb36.dhec.state.sc.us
Dyer, Charles	NH Dept of Environmental Services	T: 603-271-2991 F: 603-271-2867 E: c_dyer@des.state.nh.us
Hall, Jack	Quanterra, Inc.	T: 423-588-6401 F: 423-584-4315 E: hallj@quanterra.com
Morton, J. Stan (absent)	U.S. Dept of Energy - Idaho Operations Office	T: 208-526-2186 F: 208-526-5964 E: mortonjs@lnel.gov
Patillo, Marlene (absent)	MD Dept of the Environment	T: 410-631-3646 F: 410-631-3733 E: mpatillo@mde.state.md.us
Steinke, Athene (absent)	Severn Trent Laboratories (STL Baltimore)	T: 410-771-4920 F: 410-771-4407 E: asteinke@eaest.com
Toth, William (absent)	Worldwide Solutions for Tomorrow	T: 301-668-0499 F: 301-924-4594 E: btoth@erols.com
Wilson, Kelly (absent)	CT&E Environmental Services, Inc.	T: 616-843-1877 F: 616-845-9942 E: kwilson@cteesi.com
Finazzo, Barbara Ombudsman	U.S. EPA Region 2	T: 732-321-6754 F: 732-321-4381 E: finazzo.barbara@epamail.epa.gov
Moore, Marlene (Invited Guest)	Advanced Systems, Inc.	T: 302-834-9796 F: 302-995-1086 E: mmoore@advancedsys.com
Greene, Lisa (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: 919-541-7483 F: 919-541-7386 E: lcg@rti.org